Upshot GRAPHICS

PART 3 OF A 3-PART SERIES

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JAN STRNAD & HENRY MAYO

DINOSAUR REX

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THE DRAGONS OF SUMMER

JAN STRNAD, *Writer*
HENRY MAYO, *Artist*
CARRIE SPIEGLE, *Letterer*

WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS, *Writer*
DENNIS FUJITAKE, *Artist*
KIM THOMPSON, *Editor*

Dale Crain, art director
Carrie Spiegle, logo design
Henry Mayo, cover colors
Kim Thompson, production manager
Rachel Enger, circulation director
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WE HAD TRAVELLED THROUGH THE JUNGLY ROT LONG ENOUGH. MY RAZOR HAD GONE DULL AND I HAD APPARENTLY BEEN LISTED AS A FOUR-STAR RESTAURANT IN SOMEONE'S GUIDEBOOK FOR HUNGRY MOSQUITOES. I WAS SICK OF IT.

WE (MYSELF--***HEMPSTED WALLOPP***--AND MY COUSIN ***FLAVIA*** AND OUR MANSERVANT ***DUUBADAH***) WERE ON THE TRAIL OF MY ***UNCLE GRENVILLE***, WHO WAS, IN TURN, ON THE TRAIL OF THE ***TYRANNICORN REX*** AND THE FABULOUS ***TYRANNICORN GRAVEYARD***...

...ALSO SOUGHT BY THE NEFARIOUS ICELANDIC EXPLORER ***THORBJORN HORNNYORN*** AND HIS VIPEROUS WENCH ***SIGGA***.

WE PULLED TO A WEARY HALT ON THE PERIMETER OF WHAT WAS ONCE A MIGHTY METROPOLIS, NOW DOING A BANG-UP IMPRESSION OF THE WEEDY PATCH OUT BACK OF AUNT CELIA'S POTTING SHED.

WELL, WE'VE ARRIVED.

SO WE HAVE.

AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON FOR MY TASTES. EVEN THE ***RUBBLE*** OF CIVILIZATION LOOKS JOLLY AND HEARTHLIKE TO ME AT THIS POINT.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, DUUBADAH? IS THIS THAT HOTBED OF TYRANNICORN WORSHIPPERS WHO, EVEN FROM THE GRAVE, EXERT THEIR INFLUENCE OVER THE BEASTS?

THE EMANATIONS ARE QUITE STRONG. AND WHAT'S MORE...

...WE HAVE BEEN PRECEDED TO THIS SPOT BY OTHERS--PERHAPS BY THE VERY PERSONAGE WE SEEK.

DOES HE MEAN WE'RE CLOSING IN ON THE GOOD UNCLE?

WHY, HEMPY--YOU UNDERSTOOD HIM ALL ON YOUR OWN! THERE MAY BE HOPE FOR YOU YET!

DUUBADAH CLOSED HIS EYES AND MADE A SMALL NOISE AS IF HUMMING TO HIMSELF, A SURE SIGN THAT HE HAD CALLED HIS AMAZING PSIONIC POWERS INTO PLAY. SHORTLY...

UHM...BAD NEWS, I'M AFRAID.

MY PREVIOUS EMPLOYER, HORNNYORN, IS HERE TOO. WE'LL HAVE TO BE ON THE ALERT FOR TREACHERY OF THE HIGHEST ORDER!

DUUBADAH, GUIDED BY HIS UNCANNY BRAIN, LED US INTO THE RUINS, AND I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU THE WHOLE THING STRUCK ME AS RUMMY. VERY RUMMY INDEED.

THE PLACE GAVE ME THE CREEPS. ANY ASSOCIATIONS I'D ENTERTAINED BETWEEN THESE OMINOUS PILES OF ROCK AND THE WORDS "JOLLY" AND "HEARTHLIKE" WERE QUICKLY ABANDONED.

IN FACT, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF MY UNCLE'S STUDY, I WAS HARD PUT TO RECALL ANY PLACE ***LESS*** JOLLY OR MORE ***UN***-HEARTHLIKE THAN THE DISMAL EDIFICES NOW SURROUNDING US ON EVERY SIDE.

I SAY, DUUBADAH...

YOU DON'T SUPPOSE THERE'S ANY OF THEM ***LEFT***, DO YOU--ANY OF THOSE BRUTAL NATIVE FOLK?

IT IS DOUBTFUL, SIR. WHAT WE ARE MORE LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER...

...IS THE TYRANNICORN ITSELF, DRAWN TO THIS SITE BY THE TUG OF RACIAL MEMORY.

PROBABLY IN ***PAIN*** IF IT'S NEAR DEATH...OUT OF SORTS. FEELING A BIT ***SNAPPISH***...

IN FACT ...OH MY... WORD...!

WE WERE NEVER TO LEARN WHAT WORD DUUBADAH HAD IN MIND. FOR AT THAT VERY MOMENT...

RRUUOOWWK!

AAA!

WHA-?!

OH!

THE MONSTER HAD CAUGHT US UNAWARES, SURPRISING EVEN DUUBADAH AND HIS KEEN SENSES! FOR THE TYRANNICORN, CLOSING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US WAS THE WORK OF A MOMENT!

RRAAAOOWWK!

IIII!

WAUGH!

EEEE!

UUUHH!

OOO!

HUUUF!

AGGGH!

OWW!

HAARR!

CRACK!

WOOO!

OOOHH!

HUUUH?

ASIDE FROM THE CRIPPLING EFFECT THE MONSTER'S CHARGE HAD HAD ON THE LEVEL OF CONVERSATION, THERE WAS ONE OTHER CASUALTY...

OH BOTHER-- MY ARM! I FEAR IT'S **BROKEN**, SIR.

OH, DUUBADAH! THE PAIN MUST BE **EXTRAORDINARY!**

I HAVE BLOCKED IT MENTALLY. HOWEVER, THE BREAKAGE IS MOST INCONVENIENTLY TIMED.

THIS WAS ONE OF MY FAVORITE ARMS. I'D BECOME RATHER, AH, **ATTACHED** TO IT.

K-SNAP-POP!

IT WILL TAKE **MONTHS** TO GROW A NEW ONE!

A NEW ONE, OF COURSE.

YES...OF COURSE.

WE *KNEW* OF THE REMARKABLE REGENERATIVE POWERS OF MANY SAURICIANS, NATURALLY, BUT HAD NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE PHENOMENON IN ACTION.

RRUUUOONNK

RRUUUOONNK

WE SPENT THE NEXT SEVERAL MINUTES FOLLOWING OUR UNIDEXTEROUS FRIEND IN STUNNED QUIETUDE.

WE COULD HEAR THE TYRANNICORN'S BELLOWING AHEAD OF US. THE FACT THAT THE BEAST HADN'T CHUCKED US DOWN ITS GULLET EARLIER INDICATED THAT IT MIGHT HAVE OTHER THINGS ON ITS MIND...

RROUUONK

...SUCH AS *DYING*, WHICH IS WHAT TYRANNICORNS REPUTEDLY CAME TO THE GRAVEYARD TO DO. WE HOPED TO FOLLOW IT STRAIGHT TO THE WANDERING RELATIVE.

OUR PURSUIT LED US TO A WELL PRESERVED *ARENA*, THE SITE, AS DUUBADAH PUT IT...

...OF ALL MANNER OF SANGUINARY ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED FOR THE BLOODTHIRSTY RABBLE!

RRUUUONK

NO DOUBT THE TYRANNICORN PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THESE SCALY PROCEEDINGS!

LISTEN! THE BEAST IS IN *THERE!*

RRUUUOOONNNK

I SAY, DO YOU THINK IT'S *WISE* TO BEARD THE THE CREATURE IN ITS DEN THIS WAY? SUPPOSE IT ISN'T IN THE MOOD FOR COMPANY...?

THE POOR THING'S ON ITS LAST LEGS, HEMPY. LISTEN TO THAT PATHETIC GROANING!

CHANCES ARE WE'LL HAVE TO BUILD A CART AND CARRY IT TO THE GRAVEYARD OURSELVES!

WE ENTERED THE TUNNEL, HEARTS IN OUR THROATS, AND FELT OUR WAY GINGERLY ALONG THE WALLS.

SOON ENOUGH WE FOUND OURSELVES IN CAVERNS AS BLACK AS THE DEVIL'S TOENAILS. I HEARD A LOW CHORTLE. SOMEONE BRUSHED AGAINST MY SLEEVE, MOVING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

I SAY, FLAVIA, WAS THAT YOU?

IT WASN'T ME. I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU!

IT WAS NOT, I FEAR, ANY OF US.

WE'VE BEEN LED ASTRAY! QUICKLY -BACK TO THE ENTRANCE!

WE HOTFOOTED IT BACK TOWARDS DAYLIGHT. FROM AHEAD OF US THERE ISSUED A GRINDING NOISE LIKE DEMOSTHENES CRUNCHING A MOUTHFUL OF ROCKS.

GROANCHCH

GROANNNCHCHCH

THE GATE! SOMEONE'S LOWERING IT ON US!

CRUNCH!

"SOMEONE" INDEED!

LISTEN! THE TYRANNICORN!

BUT HOW'D IT GET OUT THERE?

RRRUUUOONNK

RRUUUOONNK

HOW MARVELOUS TO SEE YOU AGAIN, MR. WALLOPP!

SIGGA! AND HORNNYORN!

WHAT A FIENDISH TRICK, LEADING US ON WITH A RUDDY HORN!

A PRICELESS ARTIFACT--UTILIZED, NO DOUBT, TO LURE THE TYRANNICORN INTO THE ARENA!

INSTEAD, IT LURED US INTO THE SOUP! WE'VE BEEN HAD, HEMPY!

RRUUOONNK RRUUOOONNK RRUUOOOONNKK

WHAT DO WE DO NOW, DUUBADAH!

NOW YOU ROT, YOU UNGRATEFUL LITTLE RODENT!

RRUUOONNK RRUUOOONNK

LEAVE ME BOILING ALONE IN THE HOT SPRINGS, WILL YOU? STICK ME WITH THE TOWEL DEPOSIT!

RAUUOOONN

YOU TRIFLED WITH THE AFFECTIONS OF AN ICELANDER, MR. WALLOPP, AND NOW YOU'LL PAY THE PRICE FOR YOUR FOLLY!

B-B-B-B!

WILL YOU QUIT THAT BLOODY HONKING!?

RRUOO

AAAA!

FUNNY HOW, EVEN WHEN ONE IS FACING CERTAIN DOOM AT THE HANDS OF A WOMAN ONE HAS SCORNED, ONE FINDS ONESELF GRATEFUL FOR SMALL KINDNESSES.

I MIGHT HAVE ***THANKED*** SIGGA FOR THE FAVOR IF I HADN'T WANTED JUST THEN TO WRAP MY HANDS TIGHTLY AROUND HER THROAT.

THE PATH TO THE TYRANNICORN GRAVEYARD HAS BEEN WORN QUITE CLEAR. IF WE SEE YOUR UNCLE, WE'LL GIVE HIM YOUR REGARDS!

FAREWELL... "HEMPY!"

SO, HEMPSTEAD... ***THIS*** IS THE KIND OF CAD YOU ARE!

NO DOUBT OUR TRAIL TO AFRICA IS FAIRLY ***LITTERED*** WITH YOUR ROMANTIC ***CORPUS DELICTI!***

HOT SPRINGS AND BATH TOWELS, IS IT? I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED! NO WONDER YOUR FINGERS WERE ALWAYS ***PUCKERED!***

I SEE NOW I SHOULD HAVE ***LISTENED*** WHEN AUNT CELIA GROUPED YOU WITH THE LOWER INVERTEBRATES! YOU...YOU... ***BOUNDER!***

NOW, THE INTRODUCTION OF AUNT CELIA INTO ANY CONVERSATION REMOTELY PERTAINING TO ROMANCE WAS A LOW BLOW. QUICKLY I COMPOSED A STINGING REPORT.

OH? HO!

AND I MEANT EVERY SYLLABLE!

FLAVIA WAS NOT ONE TO LEAVE THE GAUNTLET LYING AT HER FEET. IMMEDIATELY SHE LEAPT INTO THE FRAY.

OONK

HO, IS IT?

POOH!

IT IS!

POOH?!

WITH KNOBS ON!

WELL!

SH! LISTEN!

WELL, WELL!

HO!

RRUUOONK

REALLY, DUUBADAH-- I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH OF HORNNYORN AND HIS WRETCHED TRUMPET WITHOUT...

I BELIEVE, SIR, THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY HEARING FROM THE *GENUINE ARTICLE*.

FURTHERMORE, THE SOURCE OF THE COMMUNICATION WOULD *SEEM* TO BE NOT FAR DOWN THIS VERY CORRIDOR!

WHAT HE MEANS, HEMPY...

WHAT HE *MEANS* IS THAT WE'RE STUCK IN THIS RUDDY TUNNEL WITH AN IRON GATE AT ONE END AND A SNARLING CARNIVORE AT THE OTHER, *THAT'S* WHAT HE MEANS!

THAT WOULD BE AN HONEST ACCOUNTING OF THE SITUATION, YES.

SO, WE'RE SUNK EITHER WAY. WELL, NO USE MEWLING IN OUR HANKIES ABOUT IT, EH?

OUR DESTINY, WHATEVER ITS FLAVOR, LIES AT THE END OF THIS CORRIDOR! I SAY WE MEET IT LIKE SPORTS! *TALLYHO!*

OF COURSE, THE BEAST *DID* COME HERE TO *DIE*...

AND IT'S PROBABLY NOT THE SPECIMEN WE MET ON THE ROAD AT ALL. PROBABLY SOME WOBBLY, TOOTHLESS OLD THING WITH LUMBAGO. DON'T YOU IMAGINE, DUUBADAH?

IF IT COMFORTS YOU, SIR.

WE LUCKED OUT AND FOUND SOME OLD TORCHES STUCK TO THE WALLS. THE CORRIDOR TWISTED AND BRANCHED OFF A NUMBER OF TIMES BUT WE PERSEVERED, TAKING OUR HEADING FROM THE REGULAR "RUONKS" THAT MET OUR EARS FROM THE TUNNEL'S DEPTHS.

THE MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF THE BUSINESS WAS THE OCCASIONAL TREMBLING OF THE WALLS AND FLOOR. DUUBADAH SAID OF THE MATTER:

THE NATIVE SPIRITS ARE NOT HAPPY WITH OUR VARIOUS INTRUSIONS ON THEIR SACRED GROUNDS. I FEAR SOME SPIRITUAL HANKY-PANKY MAY BE IN THE OFFING.

HINTING AT THE BIG SCENE WHERE THE VOLCANO BLOWS UP AND TAKES EVERYONE WITH IT, DUUBADAH?

SOME THING LIKE THAT, YES.

DUUBADAH'S WORDS WERE PROPHETIC. WE HADN'T GONE TEN PACES WHEN...

K-K-K-KRA-SH!

FLAVIA-- LOOK OUT!

OH!

THE DUST HAD NOT BEGUN TO SETTLE BEFORE FLAVIA POSED THE VERY QUESTION CURRENT NIGGLING THE SELF. NAMELY...

I SAY, HEMPSTED-- WHERE'S DUUBADAH...?

FLAVIA FELL TO HER KNEES AND BEGAN CLAWING AT THE DEBRIS. I WAS ABOUT TO DO THE SAME WHEN A RASPY, BUSY SORT OF NOISE ENTERED MY HEAD AND BUZZED AROUND INSIDE LIKE A HORNET ON A STRING.

HEMPY--DON'T JUST STAND THERE LIKE A WAX-WORK! DUUBADAH'S *BURIED!* WE HAVE TO DIG HIM OUT!

NOT... NECESSARILY.

I'M RECEIVING A BROADCAST ON THE DUUBADAH CHANNEL. HE SAYS...

...HE SAYS NOT TO WORRY... HE'S TIP-TOP...WE SHOULD PRESS ON...HE'LL MEET US FURTHER DOWN THE TUNNEL, WHERE IT LOOPS AROUND!

THANK HEAVENS!

BUT HOW CAN WE BE SURE THE TUNNEL *DOES* LOOP AROUND? WHAT IF HE'S JUST TRYING TO KEEP OUR SPIRITS UP?

NONSENSE! NOT ONLY IS DUUBADAH INFALLIBLE IN MATTERS OF NAVIGATION, BUT HE HASN'T AN UNTRUTHFUL BONE IN HIS BODY--NOT WITH FRIENDS GOOD AND TRUE, AT ANY RATE.

IF HE ASSURES US OF HIS HEALTH, THEN HE'S FIT AS A FIDDLE. IF HE PROMISES TO MEET US, THEN MEET US HE SHALL!

OH, HEMPSTED--FORGIVE ME FOR ARGUING WITH YOU EARLIER. WE *ARE* IN THIS TOGETHER, AREN'T WE?

TO THE BITTER END.

OH, OF COURSE.

AND WE MUST BE GRATEFUL FOR ONE ANOTHER, EVEN THOUGH YOU *ARE* A MODERN LOTHARIO.

YOU ADMIT IT, THEN!

CERTAINLY NOT!

YOU JUST DID!

HARDLY!

TCHAH!

HO!

WE JOURNEYED ON FOR THE BETTER PART OF A LIFETIME WITHOUT MAKING ANY APPARENT PROGRESS. MELANCHOLY SWOOPED DOWN AND SEIZED ME LIKE AUNT CELIA DID UNCLE GRENVILLE THAT TIME HE LIT UP A CIGAR AT THE DINNER TABLE.

WE'RE DOOMED, FLAVIA. BUT I MUST CONFESS--I WOULDN'T TRADE A MOMENT OF THIS WHOLE BLIGHTED TRIP

WHICHEVER OF THE MANY KINDS OF CAD YOU'VE CHARACTERIZED ME AS...I STILL ADORE YOU, AND I TREASURE MY TIME IN YOUR COMPANY.

HEMPSTED --COME AND LOOK!

GOOD LORD! HOW AMAZING!

RATHER A PIP, ISN'T IT?

THE TYRANNICORN GRAVEYARD!

AND SO IT WAS...AN ANCIENT RESERVOIR OF BONES AND (MOST NOTABLY) A FORTUNE IN *IVORY*. ENOUGH TO RANSOM SIX KINGS AND A DOZEN PRIME MINISTERS AND NEVER FEEL THE PINCH!

HEMPY, A MOMENT AGO... DID YOU SAY YOU ADORED ME?

I DID AND I DO, WITH ALL MY HEART, BUT NO TIME FOR THAT NOW!

NOT SO FAST, MR. WALLOPP!

GAAH!

WE HAVE TO FIND THE GOOD UNCLE AND KEEP HIM FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE ICE-LANDIC VIPERS! THERE'S NO TELLING ***WHAT*** THEIR ILK WILL DO TO SEW UP A CLAIM AS SIZEABLE AS THIS!

I'D HOPED THE CATACOMBS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO RE-STRAIN YOU UNTIL YOU PERISHED OF HUNGER OR THIRST. UNFORTUNATELY...

...YOU ARE EITHER MORE RESOURCEFUL OR FAR ***LUCKIER*** THAN I IMAGINED. A MORE ***DIRECT*** SOLUTION IS OBVIOUSLY CALLED FOR.

IT SHOULD BE EASY ENOUGH TO HIDE A FEW MORE BONES AMONG ALL THESE!

LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GOT US, OLD THING. WELL, THERE IS ***ONE*** CONSOLATION...

YOU MEAN, NOT DYING OF ENNUI BEHIND THE SALES COUNTER AT HARROD'S?

THERE IS THAT. BUT WHAT I WAS THINKING OF WAS...

...AT LEAST ***OUUBADAH'S*** WELL OUT OF IT, WHEREVER HE IS!

RRRR

RRRUH

UNCLE GRENVILLE!

YES, IT WAS THE RELATIVE IN THE FLESH...AND VERY LITTLE ELSE, I MIGHT ADD. THE GOOD UNCLE HAD EVIDENTLY "GONE NATIVE" ON US AND SOMEHOW GOTTEN HIMSELF CROWNED KING OF THE TYRANNI-CORNS IN THE PROCESS!

WHAT HO, CHAPPIES! LONG TIME NO SEE, EH WOT?

HE CHARGED THROUGH, MOTIONING US TO FOLLOW, WHILE OUR ADVERSARIES WERE KEPT BUSY AVOIDING CLAW AND FANG!

QUICKLY, YOU TWO! HOP ABOARD! WE HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO LOSE!

THE SPIRITS ARE ANGRY! PLUNDER AND THIEVERY DON'T SIT WELL WITH THEM, I'M AFRAID! THEY WON'T TOLERATE INTRUDERS FOR LONG!

IT WOULD HELP IF THE DASHED GROUND WOULD STAY PUT!

THE GRAVEYARD'S BEEN DEFILED! NOW THE SPIRITS HAVE GOT TO **BURY** IT...AND US **WITH** IT IF WE AREN'T LIVELY!

DUUBADAH **SAID** THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN!

BUT OUR **FORTUNE...!**

NO TIME TO FILL OUR POCKETS, HEMPY! LOOKS LIKE IT'S HARROD'S AND DRUG ADDICTIONS FOR US AFTER ALL!

BLAST! I WAS HOPING TO *AVOID* THAT!

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO IT, FLAVIA-- FACE AUNT CELIA, I MEAN... *EMPTY-HANDED* AND ALL...

PERHAPS THE SITUATION IS NOT AS HOPELESS AS THE YOUNG SIR PERCEIVES. IF DUUBADAH MAY BE ALLOWED...

OF *COURSE* YOU MAY! SUGGEST AWAY!

MY EXCURSION INTO THE BYWAYS OF THESE TUNNELS RESULTED IN A FORTUITOUS DISCOVERY WHICH, UNLESS I'M VERY MISTAKEN...

...MAY YET ALLOW OUR ENTERPRISE TO RESULT IN FINANCIAL REMUNERATION!

EH?

STUMPED YOU WITH THAT ONE, DIDN'T HE? WHAT HE *MEANS*, HEMPY...

...IS THAT, WHILE WANDERING AROUND AFTER THE CAVE-IN, DUUBADAH *APPARENTLY* STUMBLED ONTO THE TREASURE ROOM!

NOT THE TREASURE ROOM *PER SE*, MISS, BUT A PASSABLE SUBSTITUTE.

JUST AHEAD, SIR--IF YOU COULD STEER US INTO THE LEFT FORK....!

LEFT IT IS! GRAND TO HAVE YOU BACK, DUUBADAH!

THANK YOU, SIR.

TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT, DUUBADAH WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD. HIS KEEN SENSES LED US STRAIGHT TO...

...THE *HATCHING ROOM!* OF COURSE!

EVEN *MODERN* TIMES HAVE SEEN A BIT OF ACTIVITY HERE, I'LL WAGER!

LOOK, HEMPSTED! *SOME* OF THESE EGGS ARE ACTUALLY FRESH ENOUGH TO EAT!

IF ONE WERE SO INCLINED, I MEAN!

HM. I RATHER HAD THE HEART SET ON *GOLD* AND *JEWELS.* YOU KNOW--RICHES BEYOND IMAGINING AND ALL THAT.

BUCK UP, LAD! THOSE EGGS ARE *GOOD* AS GOLD!

BACK HOME, THEY'LL BE WORTH MILLIONS... *IF* WE DECIDE TO SELL!

IF? WHY ON EARTH *WOULDN'T* WE SELL THEM?

TELL ME, NEPHEW--DID YOU HAPPEN TO NOTICE THE *GALLOP* OF THESE BEASTS? THE STRIDE IS AMAZING...!

WE LOADED UP THE BUGGY AND MADE IT BACK TO THE JUNGLE WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT. WE DID NOT SEE OR HEAR FROM THE ICELANDERS AGAIN.

THE TRIP BACK WAS SLOWED BY THE FRAGILE NATURE OF OUR CARGO, GIVING UNCLE GRENVILLE AMPLE TIME TO RECOUNT THE DETAILS OF HIS RELIGIOUS CONVERSION.

THE TALE WAS A LONG ONE INVOLVING A DREAM HE'D HAD UNDER THE FEVER IN BANGUI, A REVELATION IN THE ANCIENT CITY OF THE TYRANNICORN WORSHIPPERS...

...AND SOME BUSINESS I DIDN'T FULLY UNDERSTAND ABOUT "REBIRTH AMONGST THE BONES OF ANTIQUITY" OR SOMETHING.

HOWEVER, A FEW DAYS IN THE TENDRILS RESTORED THE UNCLE'S TRUE SPIRIT AND HE QUICKLY REVERTED TO HIS FORMER SELF.

OUT OF RANGE, DASH IT!

KA-BLAM!

MORE *POWDER* NEXT TIME, DUUBADAH!

VERY GOOD, SIR.

I MYSELF WAS MOVED TO THE SWAY OF PASSION AND SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE PROPOSED MARRIAGE TO FLAVIA.

THE SILLY GIRL ACCEPTED.

SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS IDEA OF THE UNCLE'S, THIS TYRANNICORN BREEDING? ANY SUBSTANCE TO IT?

WELL, THE STOCK IS SOUND ENOUGH, BUT I WONDER IF THE GOOD UNCLE HAS THE STOMACH FOR IT.

TIED TO THE MANOR WITH AUNT CELIA. WEEKENDS SPENT HOSTING THE GENTRY. ALL THAT.

UM. FOR UNCLE GRENVILLE IT WOULD BE RATHER LIKE SETTING UP SHOP IN THE LOWER LEVELS OF HADES.

I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED TO FIND HIS COURAGE FAILING HIM BY THE TIME WE REACH BANGUI. IN POINT OF FACT...

SHUT UP, HEMPY, AND KISS ME.

...AND SO I WAS THINKING, DUUBADAH, REUNITED AS WE ARE...

WHY NOT LET THE YOUNGSTERS ***HAVE*** THE EGGS AND THE RANCH WHILE YOU AND I PURSUE OUR MANLY ADVENTURE ELSEWHERE?

AND WHAT FORM MIGHT THIS ADVENTURE ASSUME, SIR?

OH, JUST ANY BIG GAME. ANYTHING ...(PUFF, PUFF)... LESS FORMIDABLE THAN ***CELIA,*** DON'T YOU KNOW.

THE ELECTRIC ***ALLOSAUR,*** FOR EXAMPLE, OR THE GIANT RABID ***BAT...***

VERY GOOD, SIR.

THE END

EDITORIAL:

WONDERFUL WODEHOUSE

If you've enjoyed reading *Dinosaur Rex*, you would almost certainly enjoy reading the works of P.G. Wodehouse. In fact, if you *haven't* enjoyed *Dinosaur Rex*, his books would probably tickle you just the same. I have known very few people immune to the spell of Wodehouse, and it's unlikely you should be amongst them.

Dinosaur Rex is what is called *pastiche* by most other writers, *homage* by some others, and *hommage* by people who can't spell or are French. In this mini-series, Jan Strnad has borrowed many of Wodehouse's stylistic and narrative quirks and blended them together with an adventure plot, as well as his own considerable reserves of wit and humor. The result is a work that functions both as a tribute to the man Ogden Nash called "the funniest writer in the world," and as an agreeable fantasy story with its own lilt and vim.

When Pelham ("Plum") Grenville Wodehouse died in 1975, at the age of 93, eight dozen of his books had been published. (Five years later, subsequent collections had brought the tally up to an even 100.) Although they vary in subject, location, and *personae dramatis*, most of his prose works fall into a specific and unique category that can only be defined as "Wodehouse."

A Wodehouse book usually takes place among the contemporary idle upper class of England, and is articulated around a clockwork plot of more or less silly intrigue and counter-intrigue that, at the end, leaves the virtuous victorious and the villainous vanquished. (Wodehouse himself once described his books as "musical comedy without music.") Unlike in *Dinosaur Rex*, the stakes are never life and death: the threat of (comparative) destitution, a jail sentence, or a sound beating are usually all the negative impetus needed to drive the characters into convulsive and increasingly confused action. Coincidences, errors in judgment, and bad luck accumulate and escalate until the situation seems hopeless, at which point a decisive and brilliant action (or fortuitous event) reestablishes the status quo.

Although Wodehouse developed a vast, interlocking group of characters upon whom he could draw for each new story, his best-known repertory company consists of the following stalwarts (many of whom *Dinosaur Rex* readers should recognize instantly in their Strnadized guises): Bertie Wooster, an amiable young upper-class nitwit; Jeeves, his brilliant and devoted personal manservant; the combative Aunts Agatha and Dahlia, who frequently plunge Bertie and Jeeves into Wodehouse's Byzantine plots; and a rotating cast of assorted bit players including willful and/or dangerous young girls, often paired up with physically threatening villains.

Although Wodehouse's sprightly plots are charming and inventive, what distinguishes him is the genius of his humorous writing. And here only quotation will do:

> *"It was a confusion of ideas between him and one of the lions he was hunting that had caused A.B. Spottsworth to make the obituary column. He thought the lion was dead, and the lion thought it wasn't."*
>
> *—THE RETURN OF JEEVES (1954)*

Because of its simplicity, this is one of my favorite Wodehouse jokes. As I researched this article, I found myself unable to track it down, and attempted to reconstruct the punchline from memory. I eventually came across the original, but in the interim, my exertions to duplicate it had driven home how delicate and precise this kind of humor is. I had replaced the "and" that links the clauses with a semicolon; the sharp-eared reader will notice the superiority of Wodehouse's phrasing at once. In earlier gropings, I had "believed" for "thought," and "was not" for "wasn't." Each variation is less funny than Wodehouse's.

It puts me in mind of Roy Blount, Jr.'s review of the Steve Martin book *Cruel Shoes*, in which Blount dispassionately picks apart one of Martin's allegedly humorous paragraphs and explains, word by word, how it could have been funnier. Blount is easily one of the funniest contemporary writers in the English language, and his review is a remarkable display of the craftsmanship of humorous writing, but I doubt he could improve on any sentence of Wodehouse's.

Wodehouse brought to his writing an inexhaustible collection of literary references, delightfully overelaborate phrases, grounded with a sharp awareness of colloquialisms and slang. He could take something as prosaic as a butler reacting to a bad piece of news with shock, and spin it into:

"He continued to gulp. Strange wordless sounds proceeded from his pallid lips. His resemblance to the sheeted dead who squeaked and gibbered in the Roman streets a little ere the mightiest Julius fell was extraordinarily close, although to Lord Topham, who was unfamiliar with the play in which this powerful image occurs, he suggested more a cat about to have a fit. . ."

—THE OLD RELIABLE (1951)

Quoting Wodehouse is addictive. Here's another one. At night, two people run into each other on a staircase:

"Coming down to first causes, the only reason why collisions of any kind occur is because two bodies defy Nature's law that a given spot on a given plane shall at a given moment of time be occupied by only one body. There was a certain spot near the foot of the great staircase which Ashe, coming downstairs, and George Emerson coming up, had to pass on their respective routes. George reached it at one minute and three seconds after 2 a.m., moving silently but swiftly, and Ashe, also maintaining a good rate of speed, arrived there one minute and four seconds after the hour, when he ceased to walk and began to fly, accompanied by George Emerson, now going down. His arms were round George's neck, and George was clinging to his waist. In due season they reached the foot of the stairs and a small table covered with occasional china and photographs in frames which lay adjacent to the foot of the stairs.

"That, especially the occasional china, was what Baxter had heard."

—SOMETHING FRESH (1915)

There are forty years between these two samples, yet they read as if they had been written within weeks of one another. It took Wodehouse over a decade to find his tone and rhythm, but when he did, it was perfect, and he stayed with it.

Let us close with this set-piece, in which young Tuppy, a friend of Bertie Wooster's, is about to sing for a distinctly lower-class gathering a popular song of the day, "Sonny Boy"—not realizing that the previous three entertainers had sung the exact same song, causing a growing discontent among his audience.

"I don't know why, but somehow I had got it into my head that the first thing thrown at Tuppy would be a potato. One gets these fancies. It was, however, as a matter of fact, a banana, and I saw in an instant that the choice had been made by wiser heads than mine. These blokes who have grown up from childhood in the knowledge of how to treat a dramatic entertainment that doesn't please them are aware by a sort of instinct just what to do for the best, and the moment I saw that banana splash on Tuppy's shirtfront I realized how infinitely more effective and artistic it was than any potato could have been.

"Not that the potato school of thought had not also its supporters. As the proceedings warmed up, I noticed several intelligent-looking fellows who threw nothing else.

"The effect on young Tuppy was rather remarkable. His eyes bulged and his hair seemed to stand up, and yet his mouth went on opening and shutting, and you could see that in a dazed, automatic way he was still singing 'Sonny Boy.' Then, coming out of his trance, he began to pull for the shore with some rapidity. The last seen of him, he was beating a tomato to the exit by a short head."

—"Jeeves and the Song of Songs" (1929)

Most bookstores have, hidden away two or three the shelves beneath *Garfield* and *Far Side* volumes, at least a couple of P.G. Wodehouse paperbacks. It is unlikely you should run across a mediocre one, but the best—the plum de la Plum, so to speak—can usually be found between the covers of the various "Jeeves" books. Once you begin collecting them, however, you should be careful of duplications: the British and American editions sometimes bear different titles, and even dedicated Wodehousephiles confess that the titles are often not particularly descriptive in either case. Whether a book's title is *The Return of Jeeves* (as it was in the U.S.) or *Ring For Jeeves* (as it was in the U.K.), neither one is very helpful in trying to remember whether you've read it or not, especially since all Wodehouse plots sound more or less the same. David A. Jasen's 1974 biography *P.G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master* is most helpful for those trying to sort out what they've read and haven't, and was, in fact, the source of much of the raw data provided in this article.

Happy hunting!

KIM THOMPSON

THE DRAGONS OF SUMMER

DETROIT–2193 A.D.– AFTER THE GREAT COLONIZATION FAILED, & HUMANKIND CAME BACK FROM THE STARS...CHANGED, THE ORGANIZATION OF OMSBUD SERVICES WAS FORMED. WE OF THE O.O.S. ARE SUPPOSED TO ADMINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF A VAST AND GENETICALLY DIVERSE POPULATION... TO MAKE THINGS BETTER SOMEHOW.

I HAVE NO IDEA, MARCIA.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW, SIR?

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS OPERATION "**DRAGON COLONY**" MEANS...AND WE CAN'T LET IT PANIC US.

BUT IF THE O.O.S. IS INVOLVED IN BRINGING THESE DINOSAURS HERE...?

WE DON'T KNOW THAT, SEBASTIAN.

RUMORS LIKE THAT CAN DAMAGE THIS AGENCY, AND WITH COMMUNICATIONS DOWN WE CAN'T CHECK WITH WASHINGTON. THERE **IS** ONE ROUTE I CAN TRY...

HEY, WHO'S THE HELL IN CHARGE HERE?

I'M CHESTER FRANKS. I'M THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR ...AND YOU'RE...?

I'M **PISSED**...THAT'S WHO I AM! DON'T YOU PEOPLE KNOW THE WHOLE FRIGGIN' CITY'S FILLED WITH DINOSAURS?

WE'VE NOTICED IT. YES.

THEY'RE ALL THE **HELL** OVER THE PLACE! BIG FLYING ONES... LITTLE FLYING ONES... DUCK-FACED ONES... EVEN LONG-LEGGED SKINNY ONES THAT ARE RUNNING FAST AS SHIT ALL OVER THE ROAD! NOT TO MENTION THE **DAMN LIZARD CRAP** OVER EVERYTHING!

AND NOW ONE OF THOSE BIG ONES WITH THE THREE HORNS...

TRICERATOPS, PROBABLY.

YEAH, ONE OF THOSE... JUST WALKED OVER MY CAB! WALKED RIGHT OVER IT! **IT'S FLAT AS SHIT**! WHAT AM I GONNA DO?

NOW THAT'S A PROBLEM I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT. SEBASTIAN...

TAKE DOWN HIS INFO AND APPLY FOR PRIORITY TWO DISASTER AID.

YOU GOT IT, CHES. WAS IT SOLAR OR MENTHANE POWERED?

MENTHANE. WHAT'S THIS CITY COMIN' TO? GIANT LIZARDS, **F'R GOD'SAKE!**

I CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH HIM. THINGS HAVE DETERIORATED BADLY SINCE THE FIRST DINOSAUR SIGHTING THIS MORNING...

WE'VE HAD REPORTS OF BRONTOSAURI BROWSING ON THE PENTHOUSES ALONG JEFFERSON AVENUE...

...VARIOUS DOMESTIC DISRUPTIONS...

...NOT TO MENTION IMPROVISATIONS BY SOME OF THE MORE ENTERPRISING CITIZENS.

THERE'S STILL **ONE** CALL I CAN MAKE TO GET SOME STRAIGHT TALK. **MARCIA**, I WANT YOU TO INTERFACE WITH THE OFFICE OF FIRE MANAGEMENT... SEE IF WE CAN'T KEEP THE STREETS WASHED DOWN, OR WE'LL HAVE AN **EPIDEMIC** ON OUR HANDS.

GO CRAZY, MARCIA. **SURPRISE** THEM.

YESSIR, BUT... ACCORDING TO REG 236 SLASH 5, WE HAVE TO APPRISE ANOTHER DEPARTMENT 2 WORKING DAYS BEFORE AN OFFICIAL REQUEST...

I LOVE THE SONGS THE ARTIFICIAL-INTELLIGENCE AT THE SENATE OFFICE BUILDING SINGS TO YOU WHEN IT PUTS YOU ON HOLD.

WHAT'S THIS? "ALL CLIENTS WITH CORROSIVE BODILY WASTES [ABOVE 9.3 VOLATILITY UNITS] MUST BE PROVIDED WITH A LIST OF PUBLIC RESTROOMS WITH NEUTRALIZING CAPACITIES..." **MORE GODDAMN PAPERWORK!**

♪ TRNNNN-DA...DI DI ♪ ...TRNNNN-LA DODO... HELLO?

HELLO, SENATOR. CHET FRANKS FROM O.O.S.... GOT A MINUTE?

CHET...? WHY, UM, SURE... I'VE GOT A... COMMITTEE MEETING BUT ...UM, SURE. WHAT'S UP?

THAT'S INTERESTING. HE SOUNDS SCARED...

AS HEAD OF APPROPRIATIONS, I WAS HOPING YOU'D KNOW ABOUT A PROJECT I WAS SOMEHOW NEVER INFORMED ABOUT. WHAT'S "**OPERATION: DRAGON COLONY**"?

DRAGON...? I... I... DON'T KNOW... I REALLY CAN'T... CHET, THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU JUST **CAN'T** ASK ABOUT.

FUNNY, THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAID LAST SUMMER WHEN YOU NEEDED ME TO ARRANGE A NICE, QUIET OPERATION SO YOUR SON'S FIANCEE COULD HAVE HER VESTIGIAL WINGS REMOVED WITHOUT A LOT OF PUBLICITY.

THIS...IS **DIFFERENT**, CHET. I JUST CAN'T TELL YOU.

FAIR ENOUGH. SUPPOSE I TELL YOU?

THERE'S ONLY 2 REASONS I CAN THINK OF FOR THIS AGENCY TO BE MESSING AROUND WITH TIME TRAVEL. ONE WOULD BE AS A WEAPON TO SELL TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THAT. THE OTHER WOULD BE TO SEND PEOPLE IN TIME...INCONVENIENT PEOPLE, SAY. GENETICALLY DIFFICULT. MUCH EASIER TO DUMP THEM IN A COLONY BEFORE THE DAWN OF HISTORY, THAN TO KEEP TRYING TO HELP THEM. CHEAPER TOO.

SAINT GEORGE

BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG, AND INSTEAD OF **SENDING**, THE WHATSIS IS **GRABBING** BIG LIZARDS AND DUMPING THEM HERE. AM I CLOSE?

CHET, THAT'S THE MOST CYNICAL, DISLOYAL AND PARANOID THING I'VE EVER HEARD! IT'S LUNACY!

AND... YOU DIDN'T HEAR IT FROM ME... **CLICK.**

DAMN. I WAS SORT OF HOPING I WASN'T RIGHT.

MORGUE SAID I WAS NO ST. GEORGE, BUT THERE MAY BE A WAY FOR ME TO SLAY THESE DRAGONS...

JIMMIE, CAN YOU CALL UP ALL THE RECENTLY FINISHED CONSTRUCTION IN THE METRO AREA?

CAN DO, CHIEF.

I WONDER WHERE MORGUE WENT?

NOTHING SMALLER THAN A CITY BLOCK. IF THEY'VE SET UP A TIME HOLE, THEY'LL NEED SOMETHING BIG TO HIDE THE MACHINERY.

NO PROBLEMO. AREN'T TIME HOLES ILLEGAL, CHIEF?

YOU BET. SO'S **SEX PEPPER**, BUT IT'S AROUND. NOW, SEE IF ANYTHING IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN LAST WEEK OR SO.

OKAY...NO...NO... NOTHING... NO... WAIT, HERE'S SOMETHING. AN O.O.S. SANCTIONED METHANE FACTORY WAS SUPPOSED TO GO ON LINE AT 5 O'CLOCK, THIS AYE EM. IT'S ON THE RIVER, ABOUT 5 MILES FROM HERE.

SO IT'S BEEN WORKING ABOUT 11 HOURS. WHAT ARE ITS CURRENT STATS? HOW MUCH METHANE HAS IT PRODUCED?

LESSEE... MMMM... IT SAYS HERE... **NONE!**

WE'VE GOT THE **BASTARDS!**

WE'VE GOT SURVEILLANCE PODS IN THE AREA. DO YOU WANT AN IMAGE?

YOU BET.

THERE IT COMES... A LOT OF STATIC TODAY.

THAT'S BETTER... Y'KNOW, I FLY BY THIS PLACE EVERY DAY ON MY WAY TO WORK. I NEVER KNEW THEY WERE BUILDING IT.

I THINK THAT WAS THE GENERAL IDEA.

I CAN'T SEE ANY PEOPLE, CHIEF.

IT'S PROBABLY AUTOMATED. BETTER SECURITY THAT WAY. I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO LOOK FOR.

SURV POD

B4

.20

SURV POD

A1

POP!!!

GARNK?

SO THAT'S HOW THEY ARRIVE, UNHARMED. THEY MATERIALIZE OVER WATER.

SHHPLURRSHH!

THAT'S A STEGOSAURUS, ANOTHER HERBIVORE. I WONDER WHY WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY **MEAT EATER**?

IT'S PROBABLY THE LAW OF AVERAGES, CHIEF. I WAS JUST READING ABOUT IT. IN EVERY POPULATION, THE SHEEP OUT-NUMBER THE WOLVES BY 20 TO 1... OTHERWISE WE'D RUN OUT OF SHEEP.

SPEAKING OF **CARNIVORES**, IS THAT WHO I THINK IT IS?

I...GASP... KNEW IF I ...HELD ON LONG ENOUGH ...YOU'D BRING ME TO YOUR ...LAIR ... **SNOT-BUCKET**...NOW, I DON'T NEED YOU ANYMORE, SO...

IT'S THAT COP, RALPH MORGUE! WHAT DOES HE THINK HE'S DOING?

"THINK" IS PROBABLY TOO STRONG A TERM.

YIIIIIIIIIII!

OMIGOD!

KRONCK!

DO YOU THINK HE'S DEAD?

NOW... YOU... **BASTARDS**... ARE... IN... **TROUBLE** ..I'M ...**MAD**...!

NO SUCH LUCK.

THIS... IS IT. THIS IS WHERE RALPH MORGUE WINS. 'CAUSE I AIN'T AFRAID TO DIE, SLEAZE-POTS. AND WHEN I DIE, YOU ALL DIE... AND THIS DAMN MACHINE **GOES STRAIGHT TO HELL!**

HE WOULDN'T ACTUALLY SHOOT THAT... WHAT AM I SAYING? OF COURSE HE WOULD. I HOPE HIS AUDIO-IMPLANT DIDN'T DISCONNECT WHEN HE HIT.

MORGUE? CAN YOU HEAR ME, MORGUE? THIS IS CHESTER FRANKS!

DON'T DO IT!

ONLY WAY, PAPERGRINDER. GOTTA STOP THE LIZARDS FROM COMING..**STERILIZE IT... WITH FIRE!**

LISTEN, MORGUE. IF THOSE **IDIOTS** ACTUALLY LOADED THE TANK WITH METHANE, IT'LL MAKE A TEN MILE WIDE FIREBALL AND HALF THE CITY'LL BURN! **MILLIONS** WILL DIE!

Y'GOTTA BREAK A FEW EGGS, FRANKS. Y'NEVER LEARNED THAT..." RALPH MORGUE AND MILLIONS DIE TO STOP DEVIL DINOSAURS!" KINDA LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT...

05

SURV POD

MORGUE! IF THE TANK IS FILLED WITH THE TIME PROJECTION MA-CHINERY, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WILL DO, IF YOU DAMAGE IT! IT COULD PULL MOLTEN ROCK OUT OF EARTH'S CREATION... IT COULD SUCK ALL THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE BACK TO AN EARLIER TIME! **THINK, MAN!**

THEN IT'S ME AGAINST EVERYBODY... AN' I WIN!

WELL, **SHIT.** IF YOU'RE GONNA **BITCH** AT ME, IT TAKES ALL THE FUN OUT OF IT!

HE **LISTENED** TO REASON! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

EXCELLENT. NICE SAVE, FRANKS.

HI. I'M TED VAN NILES. I'M THE AGENCY HEAD HONCHO, SINCE PARLEY GIBBONS RESIGNED THIS MORNING. THERE'VE BEEN SOME SHAKE-UPS IN THE AGENCY TODAY.

I CAN IMAGINE. SO, PARLEY'S GONE. I KNOW ABOUT "OPERATION: DRAGON COLONY" BY THE WAY.

THE HEAD GUY AND OUR BELOVED MAYOR, TOO! SOMEBODY'S SHITTING BRICKS OVER THIS...!

OH, WELL, UMM... THAT'S GOOD. YOU REALIZED THE NEED FOR QUICK, DECISIVE ACTION... THE MAYOR HAS AGREED THAT WE BRING IN THE ARMY TO DISPOSE OF THE... UM... LIZARDS AND...

IS THE TIME HOLE STILL IN OPERATION?

IT'S BEING SEEN TO. THAT WAS ANOTHER SCREW-UP. ONCE THE PROCESS WAS STARTED, IT COULDN'T BE STOPPED, AND IT TOOK US A WHILE TO TUBE IN THE EXPERTS TO TINKER WITH IT. NOW, THE ARMY WILL...

NO.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NO"?

I MEAN I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE A FIREFIGHT THROUGH THIS CITY, CAUSING GOD-KNOWS HOW MUCH DESTRUCTION, JUST SO THE AGENCY ISN'T EMBARRASSED. I JUST WON'T STAND FOR IT.

BUT... CHET, THE DINOSAURS ARE DISRUPTING THE CITY. PEOPLE ARE TERRIFIED... THEY WANT ACTION! AND AS LEADER I MUST...

FRANKLY, THERE'S NOT MUCH YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT. YOU'RE A PRETTY SMALL COG AND IF YOU RAISE A STINK, YOU WON'T EVER GET TO BE A BIGGER COG. GET ME?

MARCIA, JIMMIE COME ON... SEBASTIAN, DO YOU STILL HAVE THOSE SANDWICHES?

HALF A TUNA FISH. WHY?

WE'RE GOING TO THE ROOF!

WELL, THAT WAS DRAMATIC ENOUGH. NOW IF THOSE BIG WINGED LIZARDS ARE HUNGRY, THIS SHOULD WORK...

FRANKS, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU...?

ELIMINATING THE ENTIRE PROBLEM... YOU'RE CHECKED OUT ON PSI-SENSORS, SEBASTIAN?

UH...YEAH, BUT IT'S BEEN A WHILE...

EXIT

3 WEEKS ACTUALLY. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO KNOW, BUT HE'S BEEN TRAINING IN SECRET. HE CAN'T STEP INTO MY JOB WITHOUT PSI-CAPABILITY.

IT'S AMAZINGLY LIGHT. IT MUST BE MOSTLY AIR.

SLIP ON YOUR LOUPE AND SEE IF YOU CAN GET A READING FROM BIRDIE HERE.

THAT'S **INSANE**! YOU CAN'T READ PSI FROM ANIMALS!

JUST MY POINT... AH, SEBASTIAN! DID YOU HEAR THAT? IT SAID... "I'M HUNGRY... GIVE MORE." **RIGHT, SEBASTIAN?**

THIS IS THE TRICKY PART. WILL HE SEE THAT IT'S IN HIS INTEREST TO STRING ALONG WITH ME...SO HE'LL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO REPLACE ME LATER?

UH, YEAH. THAT'S WHAT I HEARD ALL RIGHT.

BLESS HIS AMBITIOUS LITTLE HEART.

WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO...?

READ US THE RIOT ACT ON REG. 23.7, MARCIA.

OKAY... REG. 23.7... "A REGIONAL DIRECTOR MAY DECLARE A SPECIES SENTIENT IF ONE COHERENT THOUGHT IS REGISTERED BY TWO ACCREDITED PSI-WORKERS. HIS RULING MAY BE CONTESTED OR VALIDATED THROUGH A PANEL OF EXPERTS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNING BOARD..."

THAT'S JUST A **TECHNICALITY**! IT'S NEVER BEEN USED!

I'LL **BREAK** YOU FOR THIS, FRANKS.

I AM DECLARING ALL **SAUROID CREATURES** IN THIS SECTOR TO BE **HUMAN** AND UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE O.O.S. FURTHER, AS IS MY RIGHT IN CASES OF EMERGENCY, I AM CONSCRIPTING THE NATIONAL GUARD AS AN ARM OF THE O.O.S TO PROTECT THESE NEW... **PERSONS.**

TRY, BUT, FOR RIGHT NOW YOU CAN EITHER HELP WITH THE CLEAN UP... OR **GET THE HELL OUT OF MY CITY!**

I WONDER HOW LONG IT'LL TAKE HIM TO REALIZE HE'S BEATEN?

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE THEY PULLED VAN NILES OUT OF HERE? AN HOUR, MAYBE? THERE'S SOMETHING VERY GRACEFUL AND SOOTHING ABOUT THESE CREATURES...THEY'RE EASY TO WATCH.

...WORTH SAVING.

UH, CHIEF? THEY'RE SEALING THE BUILDING.

ALL RIGHT. DID OUR GUEST LEAVE IN ONE PIECE?

YEP. THE MAYOR WANTS A MEETING WITH YOU, IO AYE EM, TO FIND A WAY OF HERDING THE DINOSAURS INTO A RESERVATION, MAYBE DOWNRIVER. VAN NILES SAID... WELL, YOU CAN IMAGINE.

AND I SET UP A PRESS CONFERENCE FOR 11.

CHIEF..SEBASTIAN TOLD ME. CAN'T YOU GET INTO AN AWFUL LOT OF TROUBLE FOR **LYING** LIKE THAT?

IF HE CAN PROVE I LIED, VAN NILES CAN HAVE ME LOCKED UP FOR ABOUT 3 CENTURIES... BUT NON-SENTIENCE IS DAMN HARD TO PROVE. IT'LL TAKE THEM FIVE YEARS.

AND **ANYTHING** CAN HAPPEN IN FIVE YEARS... VAN NILES COULD DIE... I COULD DIE... AND THE DINOSAURS COULD EVEN LEARN TO THINK!

AND JIMMIE?

UH-HUH...?

DON'T CALL ME CHIEF.

RIGHT, CHIEF.

EXIT

ALL IN ALL AN INTERESTING DAY... I HOPE NOTHING HAS EATEN MY CAR.

THE END

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I want you.
I want you to drop whatever you're doing...
Let go of your inhibitions...
And slip between my covers.
Then touch me.
Yes! That's the way!
Wet your expert finger with a little spittle and—oh—
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